

## SWAZILAND



### 1. INTRODUCTION

Swaziland is one of the smallest, landlocked countries on the African continent. Whilst considered one of the wealthier nations in Africa, it remains one of the poorest in the world. 70% of Swazis live in rural areas. The country is drought-stricken resulting in a food crisis that threatens hundreds of thousands with hunger. The unemployment rate is approximately 40%, and nearly 70% of the population live on less than a dollar per day. Economic growth has wavered in the past few years, exacerbated by the economy's inability to create new jobs at the same rate that new job seekers enter the market. This is due largely in part to the country's population growth rate, which strains the natural resources and the country's ability to provide adequate social services, such as health care and education. Overgrazing, soil depletion, drought, and floods are persistent problems. Largely as a result of having the world's highest rate of HIV infection, Swaziland has the lowest life expectancy on the planet: just 32.62 years. This is expected to drop to just 29 years by the year 2010<sup>1</sup>.

Table 1: Basic Economic Indicators, Swaziland, 2005

Population (2005)	1,100,000
Languages	Official languages: English and siSwati. Other languages: Tsonga and Zulu
2005 Economic activity (% of GDP)	Agriculture: 11.6; Industry: 48.0; Services: 40.4
Human Development Index	0.500 (2004) <sup>2</sup>
Per capita Gross National Income	2004: 1,700 USD; 2005: 2,280 USD

## 2. EDUCATION SYSTEM STRUCTURE

Education and training is divided into four main sub sectors:

- Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD),
- Primary Education
- Secondary Education
- Post Secondary Education

Post Secondary Education consists of tertiary education and vocational education and these are offered by various institutions.

Primary education in Swaziland is seven years with the age range of 6 to 13 years. Secondary education is divided into two sub-systems: three years junior secondary and two years senior secondary.

Parents have always contributed towards primary education through payment of school fees and building fund (construction of school facilities). As a measure to reduce the cost burden to parents, the Government of Swaziland has:

- i) introduced the provision of free text book to all primary school pupils.
- ii) Government introduced bursaries for destitute and orphaned children.
- iii) Government is exploring the possibilities of providing primary school pupils with stationary<sup>3</sup>.

In 2001 there were 723 schools in Swaziland, 541 primary and 182 secondary. Swaziland has 1 national university as well as teacher training and nurses training colleges and a few skills training institutes.

Swaziland's adult literacy rate for 2000-2004 stood at 80% and net primary school enrolment at 77% during the same period.

## 2.1 Challenges

AIDS is having a devastating impact on children in Swaziland. An estimated 69,000 children have been orphaned due to AIDS-related causes, and an additional 60,000 are highly vulnerable due to the extreme poverty of caregivers, the sickness of parents, or home situations of abuse and exploitation. As a result of the impact of AIDS, more than one third of children cannot access basic services, including health, food, education, water and sanitation and psychosocial support. While Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs) help many of the poorest and most vulnerable meet basic needs, they are only reaching about 20 to 25 per cent of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC). Swaziland's under-five mortality rate, estimated at 74 per 1,000 live births in 1995, now stands at 156 per 1,000.

The plight of children is further exacerbated by successive years of drought, which have one third of children stunted and one third of the country's population dependent on food aid. The regional food crisis in 2006 will aggravate the situation, further increasing the burden on communities already trying to take in orphaned children<sup>4</sup>.

## 3. INFRASTRUCTURE

The telecoms sector in Swaziland features an old-style posts and telecom monopoly operator for fixed services but with private participation in mobile and Internet services. Nevertheless, fixed and mobile penetration is relatively high compared with other countries in the region. While Internet usage is growing reasonably fast, the level of penetration is still well below international standards, but about average in the region. The government is considering unbundling the national operator to create discrete telecom and regulatory entities and later privatise them

Table 3: ICT Infrastructure Statistics, Swaziland, 2004

Fixed line subscribers (2004)	46.2 per 1000 persons
Mobile subscribers (2004)	113 per 1000 persons
Dial-up subscribers (2004)	19.0 per 1000 persons
Broadband subscribers (2004)	0.0
Internet users (2004)	36.0 per 1000 persons
Television broadcast stations	12 (including 7 relay stations)(2004)
Radio stations	AM 3, FM 2, Shortwave 3 (2004)

## 4. POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 4.1 National Development Strategy- Vision 2022

The Government adopted a national economic strategy called National Development Strategy - Vision 2022 in 1997 which articulates development priorities for all economic sectors including education.

The vision of this strategy is that by the year 2022, Swaziland will be in the top 10% of the medium human development group of countries founded on sustainable economic development, social justice and political stability. The strategy's vision statement also states that the focus on quality of life of which the critical dimensions are poverty eradication, employment creation, gender equity, social integration and environmental protection which are in turn linked to education, health and other aspects of human resource development.

Human resource development is highlighted as a key macro strategy. Important elements in this strategy are appropriate education and training (including a reorientation away from the presently academic orientation to technical and vocational orientation); adequate incentives extended to businesses and households to encourage the full development of human capital; appropriate youth programmes; special attention to members of society with disabilities; and all other areas impacting on the quality of human capital (health, water, sanitation, shelter, etc).

With reference to sectoral strategies, the NDS mentions the need for the 'cableway and telecommunications' sector to

- Improve accountability and performance measures.
- Strengthen the implementation of the Public Enterprise Act to attain financial and performance targets.
- Streamline the regulatory framework.
- Allow competition in the telecommunications industry within a conducive supervisory environment.
- Base investment decisions on economic criteria.
- Co-ordinate installation of communications infrastructure with national development agents.
- Formulate and implement a rational communications policy.
- Promote the economic empowerment of nationals by encouraging their participation in telecommunications as owners, managers and technical operators (with foreign technical partners where necessary).
- Ensure that the telecommunications network is in line with new technological developments abroad.

#### **Draft National ICT Policy**

The Swaziland government, developed a draft ICT Policy Document during 2006. The Government has appointed a multi disciplinary team to consult with a wide range of stakeholders and ensure integration and linkages to the Government's National Development Strategy.

## **5. INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS**

### **5.1 Computer Education Trust (CET)**

The Swaziland Computer Education Trust (CET) was set up 1999 in Mbabane with funding from private business sources within Swaziland to address the poverty of technical education across the country's state school system. CET is a non-profit organisation legally registered in Swaziland. The organization's objective is to extend computer literacy and vocational IT training to every child in secondary and high school education in Swaziland. The computers are intended for use across the whole school curriculum with the aim of future internet integration in education.

CET facilitates the development of the necessary pedagogical materials and the delivery of professional pre-service and in-service training (INSET) for all Swaziland teachers. CET will install a 20 PC computer lab in each of the 187 secondary and high school across Swaziland and guarantee their sustainable use through the provision of full technical and maintenance back-up support facilities. CET has partnered with SchoolNet Africa and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa in upgrading its existing Technical Services Centre which serves to source, refurbish and distribute second hand computers to Swazi schools.

CET is already directly providing teacher training in IT and is currently negotiating with the Ministry of Education to integrate this provision within the existing programme of pre-service and in-service teacher training. CET has already installed 20 computers in 40 schools and is providing effective maintenance and technical support.

Teachers are given an introductory course in IT trouble-shooting and comprehensive training in the use of computers in education specifically tailored for the Swaziland education system. Negotiations have begun, and agreement in principle reached, with the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) and the Swaziland College of Technology (SCOT) to incorporate these technical functions within the framework of the curriculum of their existing computer maintenance courses and work experience placements. This will replicate the successful South African model where diploma and degree students are afforded the opportunity to develop applied skills in computer installation and maintenance whilst actually establishing the capacity to deliver computer education in schools i.e. they will actually install PCs in schools and provide technical back-up as part of their studies<sup>5</sup>

CET has also partnered with the Community Education Computer Society (CECS), a South African-based NGO which focuses on the development of ICT skills in the form of ICT literacy programs across Southern Africa. Swaziland is one of 6 countries where CECS has a dedicated ICT literacy program which was established with the support of the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA).

The eighty-hour programme on ICT literacy enables participants to use word-processing, spreadsheet and presentation software, design a basic web page using HTML, and perform basic computer troubleshooting and maintenance.

## 5.2 University of Swaziland

The University of Swaziland (UNISWA) is the only institution of higher learning in the country and has three campuses situated in Mbabane, Luyengo and Kwaluseni. The university has embarked on a programme for teachers in Information Technology to ensure a smooth introduction of computer education in schools. UNISWA has an Information Communication Technology Centre and an Institute of Distance Education which has joined the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) initiative.

<http://www.uniswa.sz/>

## 6. ENABLING AND CONSTRAINING FACTORS

The table below provides a brief overview of the current stage of development on ICTs in education in Swaziland.

Variables	Enabling	Constraining
Policy Framework & Implementation	Swaziland has a draft national ICT policy which incorporates the education sector.	
Advocacy Leadership	A dedicated task team has been established to drive the consultation and adoption of the national ICT policy	
Gender Equity re access to ICTs		No explicit mention is made of gender equality and women's empowerment with reference to

		ICTs in Swaziland
Infrastructure & Access		The lack of national infrastructure seriously constrains the use of ICTs in Swaziland's education institutions.
Collaborating mechanisms	The national ICT task team is specifically tasked to engage with many stakeholders in an attempt to foster collaboration	
Human Resource Capacity		There remains a very limited layer of skilled personnel and champions within Government to drive the national policy adoption and implementation
Fiscal Resources		No government commitment to spend from national budget. Limited financial support for civil society organisations like CET.
Learning content		Local contextually relevant learning content is currently lacking
Procurement regulations		
Attitudes	Some champions in government and civil society are very positive about continuing to promote ICT access in Swaziland and for ICTs to be used to support education.	

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<sup>1</sup> Jones M Swazi Aids cure scam uncovered. BBC Newsnight, 1 December 2006  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6197222.stm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gov.sz/home.asp?pid=745>

<sup>4</sup> Unicef (2007): Critical Issues for Children, UNICEF ESARO,  
[http://www.unicef.org/har07/index\\_37538.htm](http://www.unicef.org/har07/index_37538.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Sibiyi T (2005) : SWAZILAND'S INTERNET MARKET: SMALL BUT WITH ENORMOUS POTENTIAL.  
[http://www.balancingact-africa.com/news/back/balancing-act\\_114.html#top](http://www.balancingact-africa.com/news/back/balancing-act_114.html#top)